

1 1. A method of managing workflows in a service provider environment in which a
2 service provider provides data storage resources to a customer, comprising:
3 providing a customer with a list of types of work order requests based on a
4 permission level associated with the customer, the work order requests comprising requests
5 to manage storage configuration;
6 receiving a selection of a type of work order request from the customer;
7 enabling the customer to generate a work order request of the selected type in a work
8 order request submission;
9 creating a database object based on the work order request; and
10 storing the database object in a database.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein enabling comprises:
2 providing to the customer at least one task screen corresponding to the selected type
3 of work order request and usable by the customer to generate the work order request.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the work order request comprises values of
2 parameters specific to the selected type of work order request.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the database object comprises elements that include a
2 customer identifier and the selected type of work order request.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the elements further include a state to indicate status
2 of the work order request.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein state can be set to indicate a new work order request
2 initially and later changed to indicate a closed work order request.

- 1 7. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
2 assigning a work order request identifier to the work order request; and
3 providing the assigned work order request to the customer.
- 1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the database object is stored in the database as a table
2 entry, the table entry including fields to store information associated with each of the
3 elements.
- 1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the elements further comprise the assigned work
2 order request identifier and the work order request is stored in one of the fields in the table
3 entry.
- 1 10. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
2 processing the work order request using the table entry, processing comprising
3 attempting to perform any tasks required to satisfy the work order request; and
4 updating the state based on the results of the processing.
- 1 11. The method of claim 10, wherein updating comprises:
2 marking the state to indicate that the work order request is closed if such tasks are
3 performed successfully; and
4 otherwise, marking the state to indicate a failure.
- 1 12. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
2 generating a billable event when the work order request is closed; and
3 storing the billable event in the database in association with the customer identifier
4 and account information.
- 1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein work order request submission is in the form of an
2 email.

1 14. The method of claim 1, wherein work order request submission is in the form of
2 HTTP.

1 15. The method of claim 10, wherein processing is managed by a workflow automation
2 that periodically queries the database to locate any new work order requests based on the
3 state in the table entry for each work order request.

1 16. The method of claim 12, wherein the processing, updating, and the generating and
2 storing of the billable event are handled by the workflow automation

1 17. The method of claim 15, wherein the workflow automation invokes other processes
2 needed to perform the work order request.

1 18. The method of claim 10, wherein processing is managed manually by an
2 administrator of the service provider.

1 19. The method of claim 12, wherein the processing, updating, and the generating and
2 storing of the billable event are handled manually by the service provider administrator.

1 20. The method of claim 12, wherein the processing, updating, and the generating and
2 storing of billable events are managed manually by the service provider administrator when
3 the state indicates a failure.

1 21. A computer program product residing on a computer-readable medium for managing
2 workflows in a service provider environment in which a service provider provides data
3 storage resources to a customer, the computer program product comprising instructions
4 causing a computer to:

5 provide a customer with a list of types of work order requests based on a permission
6 level associated with the customer, the work order requests comprising requests to manage
7 storage configuration;

8 receive a selection of a type of work order request from the customer;

9 enable the customer to generate a work order request of the selected type in a work
10 order request submission;

11 create a database object based on the work order request; and

12 store the database object in a database.

1 22. An apparatus for managing workflows in a service provider environment in which a
2 service provider provides data storage resources to a customer, comprising:

3 means for providing a customer with a list of types of work order requests based on a
4 permission level associated with the customer, the work order requests comprising requests
5 to manage storage configuration;

6 means for receiving a selection of a type of work order request from the customer;

7 means for enabling the customer to generate a work order request of the selected type
8 in a work order request submission;

9 means for creating a database object based on the work order request; and

10 means for storing the database object in a database.
11